



BOARD RECOMMENDATION

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Recommendation Number: (20180522-003): Recommending Strategic Investment in Parks and Recreation Facilities

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has adopted the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Directions 2023 plan, and;

WHEREAS, both plans call for prioritizing accessibility to quality parks, trails, and recreational opportunities;

WHEREAS, Health & Environment, Culture & Lifelong Learning and Safety are all strategic budget outcomes for the Austin City Council that each impact Austin's parks in significant ways;

WHEREAS, quality parks, trails, and open space are invaluable public spaces where Austinites can come together and build community;

WHEREAS, parks, trails, and open space are not only a critical part of our urban infrastructure, but also provide tremendous economic, health, ecological, educational, and community benefits;

WHEREAS, The Trust for Public Land's Parkscore, the gold standard for assessing urban parks, ranks Austin's parks system 46th out of the 100 largest U.S. cities;

WHEREAS, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department has annual deferred maintenance in the tens of millions of dollars, and approximately \$700MM in backlogged capital improvement projects;

WHEREAS, the Aquatics Master Plan outlines a need for \$136MM to cover the cost of renovating or replacing all failing aquatics infrastructure;

WHEREAS, the Austin Parks and Recreation Department is obligated by federal law to show progress on complying with the \$140MM ADA Transition Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Parks and Recreation Board:

That the City Council fund to the fullest extent possible the FY 2019 Budget Proposals from the Parks and Recreation Department;

That the City Council direct the City Manager to investigate innovative funding mechanisms to bolster what the General Fund can provide to fill the gap between the needs of the parks system and what the city can currently fund;

That the City Council allocate an additional \$1MM to the Parks and Recreation Department's maintenance budget to begin to facilitate more timely and efficient maintenance of Parks and Recreation Department's assets and ensure the safety of park, pool, and recreation center visitors;

That the City Council allocate an additional \$500,000 to Parks and Recreation Department's aquatics budget to begin to cover historic expenditures exceeding unit allocations and expand maintenance service with the goal of keeping as many pools and splash pads open during the summer months and allow the department to address needs earlier rather than later;

That the City Council allocate \$250,000 to begin to expand access to recycling in parks, allowing the City to make progress on fulfilling its Zero Waste goals;

That the City Council allocate an additional \$200,000 to expand the Park Ranger program, which provides education and enforcement of rules governing the use of parkland, contributing to the safety and accessibility of our parks;

That the City Council allocate \$750,000 to expand service and programming and facility based youth programming within the eastern crescent of Austin in historically underserved areas of the city and seeing increased usage and desire for programming.

Date of Approval:

Record of the vote:

Attest: _____
Vera Labriola, Staff Liaison